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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 6, 2025

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## Closing USAID Harms US National Interest

The security and well-being of the American people depend on our ability to promote and defend our Republic's interests and values in a complicated and contested world. Every President since the end of World War II has understood the important role that economic and development assistance has played in securing our well-being. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has been the leading US government assistance agency for over 60 years. Along with our military, diplomatic, and intelligence services, it has been a vital guarantor of our national security.

Recent actions by the Trump Administration to shutter USAID are profoundly mistaken and harmful to the American people and will make hugely difficult maintaining even those programs, which the Trump Administration supports.

The brave and devoted American officers who make up USAID serve around the world in difficult and dangerous places bringing a message of hope and solidarity from the American people. USAID protects our citizens by identifying and addressing emerging global health threats, such as Ebola, before they reach our shores; reducing migration by promoting economic development, strengthening resilient societies, helping refugees rebuild their lives at home; and nurturing long-term partnerships with governments and societies facing the blandishments of China and other hostile actors.

Our elected government has the right to evaluate programs and decide which are the most essential. The current efforts stop the work of USAID officers without a plan. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has said that essential USAID programs will be continued but how can they be if the professional staff is dismissed and missions shuttered? Much of what USAID undertakes is mandated by Congress, whose directions are being undermined without reference to law.

The American Academy of Diplomacy is a non-profit, non-partisan, and nongovernmental organization of former U.S. Ambassadors, USAID Administrators, and heads of USAID Missions abroad, among others, who have served multiple presidents from both political parties. Our interest and purpose is the effectiveness of American foreign policy and the diplomacy that implements it.

In this light, we urge President Trump and his Administration to reconsider the actions taken against USAID, to articulate its own vision of U.S. foreign assistance before it destroys USAID's ability to respond, and to go forward using the faithful officers of USAID, who have served the United States with distinction and success. The Academy calls on Congress to insist that its laws and directives be followed.

Strengthening American Diplomacy

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